

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Laughing Turtle-Dove feeds on seeds of *Isolepis oldfieldiana* – The Laughing Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* normally occurs on the Maylands mudflats in ones and twos, the birds roaming around and paying special attention to areas where the grassland has been burnt. In January 1985 a large patch of *Isolepis oldfieldiana* was burnt and some 100 doves fed over it for three weeks. This is one of the few records of this dove feeding on seeds of native plants.

– R.H. STRANGER, 28/76 East Street, Maylands 6051.

Reed Warbler nests in Pampas Grass – The Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* is intimately tied to the rushes of freshwater swamps and streams, and it is popularly believed that it never leaves them. However in my experience the Reed Warbler does occasionally leave the rushes and in *Birds of Western Australia* (Serventy and Whittell, 1976) the authors cite the Reed Warbler as having nested in *Melaleuca*.

In March 1985 I found a nest of this species in the south quarry of the Maylands peninsula. It was attached to two leaves of a Pampas Grass *Cortaderia selloaria*, the plant having been left high and dry when the water level fell during summer. A bed of sedge was half a metre away but there was no *Typha* or *Juncus* nearby.

– R.H. STRANGER, 28/76 East Street, Maylands 6051.

Dugite eats Tiger Snake – On 9 April 1997 at West Beach in Fitzgerald River National Park in low coastal heath I observed two snakes writhing on the ground. Closer inspection revealed that

a Dugite, *Pseudonaja affinis* was in the early stages of subduing a Tiger Snake, *Notechis scutatus* and attempting to swallow it. The Dugite had three coils around the Tiger Snake which it also used as support against which to manoeuvre while swallowing the Tiger Snake's head. This was the most difficult and time consuming part of the process. Once the head was swallowed the Tiger Snake was quite subdued and the Dugite drew it out lengthwise and swallowed it much more readily. The entire process took one hour. The Dugite was approximately 1.5m long and the Tiger Snake approximately 60 cm. The entire sequence was recorded on colour print film.

– ANDREW CHAPMAN, PO Box 264, Ravensthorpe WA 6346.

Frost damage to vegetation – Between 15–23 July 1997 well below average temperatures were recorded in southern WA due to cloudless skies, light northerly daytime winds and very still nights. At Carracarrup 19km south of Ravensthorpe I recorded 8 consecutive frosts; daily minimum temperatures were always zero or below, including a minimum ground temperature of minus 6° C. In early August some vegetation, particularly growing in river or creek valleys began to exhibit signs of frost damage; leaves were 'browned-off' – similar in appearance to herbicide application. This applied in particular to *Acacia rostellifera* where it grew without any overstorey, the leaves were often entirely 'browned'. *Acacia cyclops* shrubs to 1.5m growing along creeklines without overstorey were killed by this frost. In the West River valley *Eucalyptus tetragona* where it was low growing only i.e. <1.5m had the distal and marginal portions of leaves 'browned'. Taller plants were